

Introduction to Candidate Species Workshop



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Purposes of Workshop

- Discuss approaches to estimating extinction risk
- Understand differences between MSFCMA's "overfishing" and ESA's "threatened" or "endangered"
- Review other extinction risk criteria (AFS, CITES, Hawaii) and refine ours
- Consider new candidate species
- Discuss proactive conservation efforts

Definition of candidate species

- Term is not mentioned in the ESA itself
- Section 4 regs – “any species being considered by the Secretary for listing as an endangered or a threatened species, but not yet the subject of a proposed rule”
- NMFS has no regulatory authority over candidate species

The candidate species list:

- Increases public awareness
- Identifies species in need of protective measures
- Stimulates voluntary conservation efforts, which may result in a lower likelihood of an ESA listing
- Identifies uncertainties associated with the status of the species.

Candidate species criteria

- Based on reliable information on the status of species/vertebrate population
- Biological status is determined by both demography and genetic composition of the species/vertebrate population.
- Evidence of **demographic** or **genetic** concerns warrants adding a species or vertebrate population to the candidate species list.

Demographic concerns

- Significant decline in abundance or range from historical levels that would indicate that listing may be warranted
- This could result from any cause, such as: overharvest, habitat degradation, disease outbreaks, predation, natural climatic conditions, and hatchery operations that negatively impact natural stocks.

Genetic Concerns

Outbreeding and inbreeding depression resulting from poor hatchery practices or substantially reduced numbers of natural individuals

ESA Definitions

- Endangered species - Any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range
- Threatened species - Any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range

Are there better ways to:

- Identify species for inclusion on the candidate species list?
- Assess if a species or population is at risk of becoming endangered or extinct?
- Encourage the public to conserve species before they are in need of ESA protection?